'Commission Thwarted Us at Every Turn,' Waggoner Carr Tells TATTLER

Justice Warren Blocked 2nd Probe of JFK Death, Ex-Texas Attorney General Charges

It was former Chief Justice Earl Warren himself who blocked a second, more open investigation of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, charges the man who headed that second probe.

Waggoner Carr, who was attorney general of Texas when President Kennedy was murdered in Dallas, set out to conduct his own thorough, state investigation of the tragedy. Few Americans now recall that Carr's investigation was actually launched well before President Johnson appointed the Warren Commission.

And now Carr, in an exclusive TATTLER interview, reveals for the first time that it was Warren who thwarted that state investigation, an inquiry that might have erased all those doubts that still surround the assassination more than 10 years later.

Carr, now retired from public service, recalled in the TATTLER interview his bitter, frustrating fight with Warren in which his open-hearings proposal was turned down and his own inquiry itself hamstrung.

"After Oswald was killed by Ruby," said Carr, "I decided that a thorough investigation must be undertaken immediately. As state attorney general, I had the authority to call a 'court of inquiry.'

"This is a legal device to look into matters which are questionable. The Texas 'court of inquiry' has subpoena powers, can take testimony under oath, and quite often results in evidence being developed to justify the filing of criminal charges or providing grand juries with enough facts to return indictments.

By JAMES KERR
Special to the National Tattler

"My plan was to have everyone subpoenaed who knew anything about the assassination and related events."

CARR SAID that when fellow Texan President Johnson learned of his plan, Johnson wholeheartedly agreed and urged the Texas attorney general to announce it at a Washington press conference.

Carr recalled bitterly the reaction to that announcement.

"The press conference was far from friendly," he said. "The world press was in town for President Kennedy's funeral, and after I made my announcement, the place broke into an uproar. Many of the newsmen cursed and denounced me for being a Texan and a Texas official."

But Carr promptly began assembling an organization to conduct his inquiry.

He chose as his assistants two attorneys who had been members of the prosecution team at the Nuremberg war crimes trial at the end of World War II.

ONE OF THEM was Robert G. Storey. And the other was Leon Jaworski, the Houston lawyer who is now special Watergate prosecutor.

Within a few days, Carr learned that President Johnson was creating another investigative body, the Warren Commission.

Carr recalls, "I was told by Johnson aides that the President had decided to set up his own commission to keep Congress from getting into the act."

The Texan, who was widely respected across the state as a prosecutor, hoped that the two investigations would work cooperatively, sharing their information.

Thus when Carr received a tip that

suggested Lee Harvey Oswald had been a secret agent of the FBI, he lost no time in contacting Warren and an emergency joint-meeting of the two investigative bodies was held.

BUT THAT was the last joint meeting.

Actually, the Warren Commission

PRESIDENT JOHNSON at first gave Carr go ahead to launch state probe ... then changed his mind and gave the job to Warren who sought to block Carr's investigation.

never recognized the Texas inquiry and tried to intimidate its chairman into abandoning his probe, Carr revealed.

"Warren was openly hostile toward us," Carr recalled. "He just wanted us to go away.

"Very shortly, Warren made himself inaccessible to us and we were forced to communicate through Nicholas Katzenbach, then assistant to U.S. Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy. Once I sat in Katzenbach's office for three days and most of three nights, just trying to get some word from him."

At last, Carr became outraged over what he considered rude, high-handed treatment and decided to bring matters to a head.

CARR VIVIDLY recalls that moment in Katzenbach's office.

> ***'I decided that a thorough probe must be undertaken immediately...'***
>
> **–Waggoner Carr**

"I stood up and put on my hat," he recalled wryly. "I called out that I might not be a big shot like the Chief Justice, but as a state official I certainly had authority. I said I was going back to Texas and open my public investigation in competition with Warren's secret inquiry."

This turned the trick.

The Warren Commission chairman immediately sent for Carr and promised that the cold war was off, that from then on nothing would be withheld from the Texas investigators.

Warren even signed an agreement to that effect.

"BUT WARREN violated this agreement," says Carr. "Very soon, I learned that he was conducting secret meetings of which we weren't notified. I called his hand and he was very upset. He knew then that I wouldn't abandon my inquiry. So he promised that we could sit in on all the Warren Commission meetings and we did."

But, TATTLER learned, the Warren Commission wasn't through with its mistreatment of the Texas investigators. The Warren report gave no credit or even mentioned the contributions of the Texas group. Actually, the Texans furnished considerable information to the Warren Commission.

Plainly, the occasion for the one and only joint meeting of the two investigations was extremely irksome to Warren, possibly because of his animosity toward Carr.

At that meeting, the Warren Commission solemnly vowed to check out the report of Oswald's reported FBI employment, not just take the FBI's word that it wasn't true.

IN FACT, THE Warren Commission did what it said it wouldn't do — accepted the FBI's word.

Today, Carr is more kindly disposed toward the Warren Commission than might be expected.

He told TATTLER, "Actually they had subpoena powers anywhere in the nation, whereas we were restricted to Texas. Also, through diplomatic channels, they obtained valuable information from Russia and Mexico which we couldn't have obtained. I seem to recall from sitting in on the meetings that Oswald visited Cuba at one time."

If Carr's recollection of this is correct, it was never included in the Warren Commission report.

Though federal officials ignored Carr during the 1960s, he claims the U.S. Justice Department under the direction of John Mitchell showed a keen interest in him early in the 1970s.

CARR IS convinced this later treatment was even more diabolical than that accorded him by Earl Warren.

Carr declared that Mitchell's Justice Department involved him in a stock scandal purely for political reasons.

He claims that the charges of which he was recently acquitted were part of the Watergate conspiracy.

"Many people seem to think that Watergate was something that happened in Washington," he said. "But its tentacles reached out into various states."